

Fosse Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120089
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	313511
Inspection dates	22–23 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Marion Thompson

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	354
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Gollightly
Headteacher	Steve Boyce
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2004
School address	Balfour Street Leicester LE3 5EA
Telephone number	01162 519261
Fax number	01162 512841

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school, where the majority of pupils are from White British background. Over a third of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest of which is of British-Indian origin. Around one in five pupils speak English as an additional language and a large number of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Children's levels of skills on entry to Foundation Stage 1 and 2 are very low, especially in relation to language and communication. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is an above average turnover of pupils. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is high. The governing body has a shortfall of seven governors.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, behave well and have positive attitudes to learning because of the good levels of pastoral care and support the school provides. However, they do not achieve as well as they should academically because teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management are inadequate. The school's self-evaluation is too generous and the headteacher and senior team have been too slow to recognise and address weaknesses. A lack of subject leadership in the key areas of literacy and numeracy has also impeded the school's work.

There have been a number of very recent improvements. Better systems are in place to monitor pupils' progress, but the information generated is not used consistently to inform the school's self-evaluation. With support from the local authority, work has begun on improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum in literacy and numeracy. A sound plan for raising attainment has been developed and monitoring of teaching is becoming more accurate. Subject leaders for literacy and numeracy have just been appointed. However, it is too soon for these actions to have had an impact on pupils' achievement. Governors are highly committed to the school, but the number of governors is well under strength. They do not have the expertise to monitor the work of the school closely enough and do not provide the school with sufficient challenge.

The Foundation Stage provides children with a satisfactory standard of education because provision and leadership and management are sound. In Years 2 and 6 attainment in English, mathematics and science has fallen for the last two years. Currently, standards remain well below the national average. Despite making more rapid progress in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is good, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall. Teaching and the curriculum do not consistently provide an appropriate level of challenge to pupils of all abilities, because assessment information is not used to plan lessons. The curriculum in science is not covered in sufficient depth, especially in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English make satisfactory progress. Lower ability pupils who do not receive individual help and more able pupils make inadequate progress. Guidance to pupils on how to improve their work is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They pay good attention to safety in the rather cramped school building and playground. Most pupils attend regularly but, despite robust efforts by the school, a small number are absent too often, sometimes with the consent of their parents. Pupils take their responsibilities in the school and wider community seriously and carry them out well. They are developing a good understanding of how to stay healthy and of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Some have visited the Houses of Parliament to meet their local Member of Parliament. Pupils' poor skills in literacy and numeracy do not prepare them well enough for secondary school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress, because teaching, the curriculum and academic guidance are sound. However, levels of skills remain well below those expected for their age by the end of Foundation 2. Children settle quickly because the induction process is sensitive to their needs and staff provide good levels of care. Learning needs are identified accurately and this is beginning to improve children's achievement in weaker areas. The curriculum provides a satisfactory balance of teacher directed activities and those chosen by children. However, the planning of outdoor activities is in need of further development. Occasionally, the achievement of the most able children is limited, because they are simply following instructions rather than deciding themselves how to undertake more demanding tasks. Children enjoy the activities provided for them and demonstrate independence in their choice of activities. They show consideration to each other.

What the school should do to improve further

-
- Improve standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that teaching and the curriculum consistently provide the right level of challenge for all pupils.
- Ensure that all aspects of the science curriculum are covered in sufficient depth, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- Ensure that self-evaluation is based on a rigorous and accurate analysis of the work of the school, including assessment data, so that the school's leaders identify and address weaknesses at the early stages.
- Deal effectively with current weaknesses by implementing the plan to raise attainment swiftly and determinedly.
- Work with the local authority to recruit and train governors to monitor the work of the school and provide sufficient challenge.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in social and emotional development. Least progress is made in writing, calculation and linking sounds and letters, but this is improving because of effectively targeted support. In Years 1 to 6 standards are exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science. The school has set appropriately challenging targets, but data indicates that most pupils are unlikely to meet them. This represents unsatisfactory progress for the majority of pupils. Progress is more rapid in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is good, but there is too much ground to make up. Writing for older pupils is improving, but punctuation, spelling and organisation of written work remain too weak. In science, pupils have limited skills in conducting independent enquiry. Too few opportunities for the more able pupils to explain their findings limit the progress they make. Progress in mathematics is limited, especially for the more able pupils in Year 2. Pupils at the early stages of learning English make broadly satisfactory progress. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress when they receive additional support. The achievement of other lower ability pupils is unsatisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy school and behave well. They get on with their work, even when the pace of lessons is slow, because relationships are good. Most pupils attend regularly, but a small number are persistently absent. Pupils increasingly eat sensibly and take part in the physical activities provided by the school. They feel safe and know that the school deals with occasional bullying effectively. They make good contributions to the school and wider community, such as being librarians and mentors for younger children. The school council has been involved in discussing with the school traffic officer how traffic around the school is controlled. While pupils have good social skills, their poor literacy and numeracy skills mean they are not prepared well enough for the future. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they have a good understanding of the wide range of faiths and cultures in Britain today.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Work is often not matched to pupils' learning needs. This is because assessment is not used effectively to plan work that presents the right level of challenge, especially for the most able. The pace of lessons is sometimes too slow and pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently. Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6, but there is insufficient time to catch up on slower learning in other years. Marking is satisfactory overall, and often good in literacy, with specific targets and guidance for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and this leads to a calm atmosphere in classrooms. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those in the early stages of learning English is satisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum is not sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils in literacy, numeracy and science. The curriculum for science is unsatisfactory, especially in Years 1 and 2. Some aspects of work are not covered in sufficient depth, so they have to be revisited later. Personal development is promoted well and information and communication technology is used soundly as a tool to support pupils' learning. Curriculum enrichment is satisfactory, with additional activities including visitors, curriculum days and educational trips, which engage pupils in their learning. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory, because of effectively targeted support.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents appreciate the good care and support the school provides for pupils and correctly feel the school is safe and secure. Pupils report that they have adults they can turn to if they are worried about anything. Procedures to deal with absence and holidays in term-time are robust, and supported by good links with external agencies. Despite the small number of pupils who do not attend regularly and whose absence is often condoned by their parents, attendance is

slowly improving. Academic guidance is satisfactory overall and improving but, with the exception of literacy in Years 5 and 6, pupils do not consistently use their targets to improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified quickly and receive support, but their progress is monitored erratically.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The headteacher provides good leadership in relation to promoting pupils' personal development. He has won the support and trust of parents. However, he does not provide a clear sense of direction for the school in relation to raising standards and improving achievement. Self-evaluation and monitoring of teaching and the curriculum by the senior team are over generous. As a result, the school has been slow to recognise and tackle weaknesses and pupils' achievement has declined. Gaps in key areas, such as subject leadership of literacy and numeracy, have adversely affected planning. There have been a number of recent improvements, some undertaken in conjunction with the local authority, such as improved tracking of pupils' achievement. A sensibly prioritised plan for raising attainment is in place. Governors provide good support for the school, but there are too many gaps on the governing body for it to be fully effective. Governors do not have the skills required to monitor the school robustly and provide the challenge required to move the school forward. The school has made inadequate progress since the previous inspection.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fosse Primary School, Leicester, LE3 5EA

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and other activities and hearing your views about the school. A lot of your parents and carers responded to our questionnaire. Most of them thought highly of the work of the school, so please discuss this letter with them.

Your parents are right in thinking that the school takes good care of you, that you behave well and enjoy school. You act safely in school and the playground, even though they are rather small. You know how to keep fit and healthy and a reasonable number of you take part in and enjoy the range of sporting and other activities the school provides. You take your responsibilities, like helping younger children, seriously and perform them well. Most of you attend school regularly, but a few of you have too much time off, sometimes with the permission of your parents.

You listen carefully in class and try hard with your work, but too many of you are not doing as well as you should in English, mathematics and science. This is because in lessons, work is not always aimed at the right level for you. Sometimes it is too easy and sometimes too hard. You do not have enough opportunities to carry out investigations in science and to cover work in enough depth, especially in Years 1 and 2. For example, you are often asked to describe what you have observed, but do not have the chance to say why you think it may have happened.

- School leaders have been too slow to recognise these shortcomings. Although this is a caring school, where children feel safe and happy, it is not providing an acceptable standard of education because you are not achieving as well as you should. The school is beginning to take steps to improve things, but this is at the early stages. We have asked the school to:
 - improve your work in English, mathematics and science by making sure that work is aimed at the right level for you
 - improve your work in science by making sure you cover all aspects in enough depth, especially in Years 1 and 2
 - make sure that systems are in place so that when things are not as good as they should be, school leaders realise it quickly and take steps to put it right
 - carry out the new plans for improvement as quickly as possible
 - get some new governors and provide them with training so they can challenge the school to improve.

Best wishes

Marion Thompson Lead inspector

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Lead inspector